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THAT WORLD WHOSE SANITY WE KNOW

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Abstract

The plane dozed above the wavering green of sun-bright South Australian farms, intensities of gouged-out ochre rock, a river's slithering invitation before the arthritic land's gnarled knuckle hills. On one someone had patterned trees to give all lingerers above the message "Jesus Lives".

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 sun-bright South Australian farms,
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 before the arthritic land's
 gnarled knuckle hills. On one
 someone had patterned trees to give
 all lingerers above
 the message "Jesus Lives".

Lives, I suppose, in leaf and branch and limb
 – natural certainties to worship Him.
 I was leafing through poems by Derek Mahon
 "who has hardly grasped what life is about"
 and recalled yesterday's train, that couple
 thrusting their "weighty books", *Bible Tales*
 and *What the Bible is All About*
 at me like a threat. I'd
 fixed my eyes on the opposite
 window's speeding riffs
 of grass, and they'd
 harangued each other and the air
 all down the Sydney track.

In the news a politician's
 try at suicide, Olympics plans,
 a convicted nurse's
 five hundred lashes.
 Oh, to live with such atrophy of doubt,
 cliffs of knowledge,
 such certainty as
 to carve all surprise
 out of our lives!
 The distant sea roughed up each edge of coast,
 over each cricket pitch with its single I
 and all lying-in-wait questions we flew,
 then Adelaide dipped into view.